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AMERICAN ART JOURNAL.

A WEEKLY RECORD OF MUSIC, ART. AND LITERATURE.

HENRY C. WATSON Editor.

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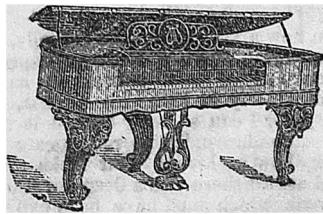
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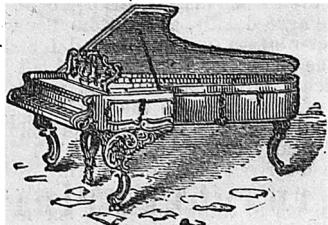
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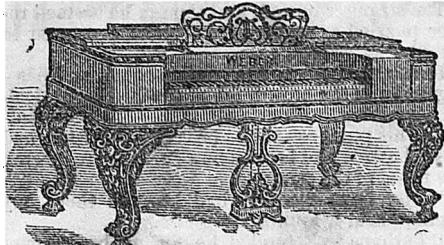


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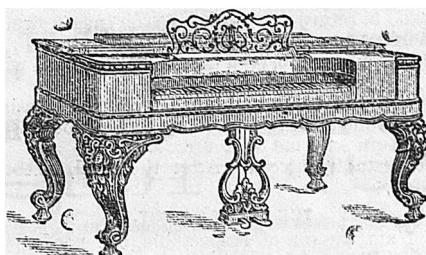


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THE PIANO.

"Extensive Sale of Objects of Curiosity, Pictures, Books, Clocks, and other Furniture, the Property of a Lady lately deceased."—Such was the announcement in *Galignani's Messenger*, which first struck my eye as I sat listlessly looking out of the reading-room window in the Rue Vivienne, alternately glancing at the journal I have mentioned, and the heavy drops of rain as they pattered against the panes of glass. Inwardly I had been drawing a comparison between my present situation and that of the gentleman similarly situated and graphically described by Washington Irving. As far as actual position was concerned, I yielded without hesitation to the stout gentleman, for he had at least a flock of ducks to watch and observe, whereas in the court-yard of Monsieur Galignani, not even a blade of grass showed itself to break the monotony of the scene.

It may seem strange that in a gay metropolis like Paris, where every one confessedly resorts for amusement, that I should feel thus lone and dull, puzzled, awfully puzzled, how to kill time, yet many an English traveller, I feel confident, will bear me out, that nothing is so solitary, so care-begetting as the consciousness of being an utter stranger, "unknowing and unknown," in a large and populous city.

The words, however, I had just read, at once struck out a new path of pleasure for me to tread. Many men love attending auctions, many go to them without any desire to purchase, for the mere delight of gazing at the exciting scene, but

none ever, I believe, liked lounging in one of those marts so well as myself. None could ever have been more anxious to increase his cabinet of *virtu*. None was ever more delighted at the idea of the amusement he was about to share in than was I, when I came to the advertisement in question, so quickly putting on my hat, and placing my cane under my arm, in the true John Bull style, I hastily quitted the room, and calling for a cab, was in less than ten minutes safely landed in the auction rooms in the Rue —.

Here was a scene for a philosopher to analyse—the cool, the cunning dealer, the anxious virtuoso, the eager female and the careless idler. The rich, the poor, the humble, and the proud, all brought to a common level, by a desire to purchase some article of furniture, or, like myself, to kill time. The pretty grisette ogling, coyly attempting to avoid the very glances she seeks—the looks of anger exhibited by those who were out-bid, and the quiet triumph of the happy purchasers, all combined to afford me a rich treat, for I forgot to tell my readers at the out-start, that I am a great studier of the book of Nature, and that I never behold a countenance in which I do not endeavor to trace the character of the heart to which it serves as title-page. In short, I am a sort of *peripatetic* philosopher, whose first principle is founded on a trite line of Pope, which tells us that—

"The proper study of mankind is man." But as I have very little to do with the story I am about to relate, I'll at once plunge into my subject.

One of the first objects offered for sale on my entrance was an old piano, an instrument so utterly worthless that I was not a little astonished at hearing a sharp competition suddenly arise, and the hitherto monotonous tone of the auctioneer, the slow bidding repeated by him, in a moment pour forth with a volubility which would not have disgraced some of our first-rate sons of the hammer.

In French auctions it is customary for the actual worth (*mise à prix*) of every lot to be publicly stated by a sworn appraiser as the object is put up for sale. The piano had thus been valued at 150 francs, the chances were, that it would of course be sold at considerable under that term.

"One hundred and eighty!" cried a merchant opposite to me, evidently drawn on this exorbitant bid by opposition.

"One hundred and eighty-five!" echoed close to my ear.

The tone in which this sum was named made me turn towards the speaker; the evident emotion with which the words were uttered, instantly aroused my curiosity.

"One hundred and ninety! One hundred and ninety-five!"

"Two hundred," roared out the now maddened dealer, "two hundred!"

"Two hundred," repeated the auctioneer, "will any one bid more? 'tis against you, sir!" added he, speaking in a tone of soft-insinuation, turning to the young man beside me.

"Two hundred and —. Great Heaven! I cannot—I have not got it,"—and as the auctioneer knocked down the article to the dealer, I saw the young man, after casting a look of almost despair at the instrument he seemed so highly to prize, turn away, and with a tear in his eye approached the door.

I am a little bit of a philanthropist as well as a philosopher. The young man's evident agitation, his disappointment suddenly created in my breast a desire to serve him. From his dress and style he was certainly an artist or a musician. His long black hair curling down his back clearly denoted this. His dark habiliments bespeak him to be a mourner. His youth and seeming grief at losing the piano at once interested me, so stepping up to him I stammered out something about my regret at seeing him outbid, and tried to console him by assuring him that the instrument was not worth half the money paid for it.

"I know it, sir, I know it—but I would have given every thing I possessed to obtain it."

"Why not then?" I paused—the youth eyed me from head to foot, he seemed to be doubting within his own mind whether my questions arose from kindness or mere curiosity, whether it would be right to reply candidly to a stranger or not; for an instant he assumed a haughty look of wounded pride, and was about to turn away, when more properly reading the real motive which urged my question, he suddenly changed his demeanor, and with a look of despair, yet candor, replied,

"You would ask me, sir, why I did not continue to bid for an object so prized? I will reply to you without shame; I offered all the money I possess in the world for it; I had no more, or I would never have allowed another to possess that instrument."

"I beg your pardon, but will you do me the favor to speak to me in a moment or two outside the street door; if you will await for me I will be with you in less than five minutes."

The stranger bowed, and though he seemed rather puzzled at my strange request, promised to comply.

I hastened back to the auction-room, and passing through the crowd, found the late eager dealer examining, with evident marks of disappointment, his purchase. The heat of opposition had passed away, and he was now curiously reviewing the fruits of the struggle.

"You have made a bad bargain there, my friend," said I, approaching him.

"Perhaps so," replied he, for no broker ever allows *positively* that he has made a dear purchase.

"Will you part with it?"

The man looked up—a cunning glance shot from his eye. I at once saw my mistake. From my readiness to take the article off his hands, he again began to think he had made a good bargain, and after a discussion of some minutes, only ceded the piano to me at a profit of fifty francs, though I really believe he would gladly have given half that sum ~~for~~ ^{to have} got any one to relieve him from it ten minutes before.

The bargain concluded, the money paid, I hastened out to the young stranger. When I told him what I had done I thought he would have embraced me. Never did I see joy so clearly, so warmly expressed. He poured forth his gratitude in terms I should be ashamed to record. He begged and prayed me to tell him how he could repay me. As to the money, he hoped soon to be able to refund it, but my kindness—never, never, could he repay that. I was his best friend on earth—I was, in fact—but I see no use in telling all he said; suffice it to add, I assured him all I asked in return was his motives for thus desiring to possess an entirely worthless piano.

"It is a long story—a harassing one, but I will tell it to you."

"Will you come and lunch with me? Desire the instrument to be sent home to your lodgings, and return with me to Meurice's."

He instantly agreed. After the meal, he thus related,

THE ARTIST'S STORY.

"I am the son of respectable, but needy parents. Plunged into a ruinous law-suit by the misconduct of one of his nearest friends, my father found his pecuniary affairs so dreadfully embarrassed that he determined on bringing me up a music-master. In my earliest years I have ever displayed a taste for that art, and on the very instrument you saw this day I first learned to play. The acquirement was then intended as an accomplishment, when subsequently my parents fell into poverty, it became my only means of subsistence. There is no passion which more ardently increases than does the love of music. Each day my study became more pleasing, and as I overcame each difficulty, a desire to encounter more obstacles hourly sprang up in my breast. In a word, I applied myself so diligently, and with such success that I was fortunate enough to carry off the first prize of the Conservatoire for my execution of Thalberg's 'Moise.' My delight at this fortunate circumstance only served to make

the art I professed more dear to me. My parents soon afterwards died, and I was left alone in the world to shift for myself.

"Thanks to good fortune rather than to my particular merit, I found plenty of scholars, and I already began to dream of realizing a future competence, when I was recommended as musical instructor to Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse, an orphan heiress, who resided with an uncle, to whose guardianship she had been committed, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

"Agatha d'Olbreuse, sir, was a divine creature; I can scarcely believe that she was ever designed for this world. So perfect in every way, in mind, in talent—in person equally gifted. She was one of the few beings whom we see and cannot designate otherwise than as an angel. You will pardon my raptures—you will, perhaps, blame them,—but they are only just tributes to the worth of one now in heaven," and the youth paused for a moment, a tear glistened in his eye, but checking his emotion, he hurriedly continued—"It may readily be imagined that such a being soon became my best pupil; indeed, I have no hesitation in saying she soon excelled her master.

"I am now about to confess my folly, my presumption—were there a stronger expression I would make use of it—to express my hardihood. I fell desperately in love with Agatha, and she from pity, for I can scarcely believe it could be otherwise, condescended to reciprocate the feeling. Oh, how we loved! Our looks must have betrayed us, for there was a deep devotion seated in our souls, which must have been expressed in our eyes. When interrupted in our confessions of mutual affection by visitors or members of the family, then would we together hang over the piano, the same piano which you have this day purchased for me (for she had expressed a desire to learn on the very instrument by which I had acquired my musical fame), and in melting melody express those outpourings of love which we did not dare to utter.

"Agatha had promised to become my wife, but, alas! she was only nineteen, and the two years which must intervene before she could become a free agent, seemed to us an age. A few weeks only of this period had elapsed when Monsieur Roy, her uncle, discovered our attachment, and considering, with great justice, that his niece was entitled to a better match, banished me the house, threatening to remove Agatha from France if she did not instantly consent to give promise never to see me without his leave. I induced her to give this pledge, and we separated, hoping soon to meet again under happier circumstances. To keep up, however, a sort of correspondence, to express, even when distant, the sympathy of our souls, we agreed daily, at a certain hour, to play a particular air—a touching ballad I had taught her on the piano; for this purpose I left her the one which I now repose, and whose chords have so often vibrated to the tender sorrows of my adored Agatha. This state of things had endured nearly two years. Already I knew the period had arrived which would bring freedom to her and happiness to myself, and I only awaited her summons to throw myself at her feet, when one morning, to my great surprise, a servant of Mr. Roy's entered my breakfast-room. He requested me to follow him to his master. I did so. On our way he informed me that Agatha, my Agatha, was dying!"

For a few moments the young artist paused, overcome by grief; becoming at length more calm, with an effort he continued:

"In her last moments she had desired to see me, and I was now sent for to take leave of her. How can I ever paint the scene which met my view as I entered the chamber where all I loved was about to be snatched from me, or the feelings which then shook my breast? I will hurry over it.

"On her bed, evidently in the very last stage of rapid decline, lay my once lovely and blooming Agatha, pale, more pale than Parian marble.

"As I entered, she attempted to raise her head, but, alas! she was already too powerless

to do so. Her relations and friends—or rather fiends, for they had brought her to this by their cruelty—made way for me to approach her. I did so; and kneeling down, I kissed her cold hand, as I fervently offered up a prayer to Heaven to receive her soul.

"In an instant a languid smile played upon her languid features, and, pointing to my piano, which stood open in the room, expressed by signs (for her voice was completely gone) a desire that I should touch it.

"I flew to it, and with feelings of grief beyond description, I played over the melancholy air we had agreed upon as the record of our feelings. My heart seemed to respond to every note, and I could almost fancy I heard her voice in every tone. Suddenly a chord rudely and loudly gave way—at that instant Agatha's poor soul took its eternal flight.

"Can you now wonder that I desired to possess an instrument whose every note seems to breathe her voice—our mutual friend—our only confidant? I heard that the property of Agatha was to be sold, in order to be divided between her relations. This it was which prevented my hitherto leaving Paris. I have waited now six months for the moment when I could purchase the only object on earth dear to me. Imagine, then, sir, how grateful I must feel to you who have enabled me to obtain the only treasure I desired to possess in this world."

After a few common attempts on my part to console him, the artist arose, and assuring me I should see him again before he left Paris, took up his hat and quitted me.

The next morning I was sitting before my fire in the act of reading several letters I had received from England, when my new friend and protege rushed in.

"Ah, sir, 'tis to you I owe all. I knew that my Agatha wished me to possess that piano. See, see this," and he handed me a paper. It ran as follows :

"Surrounded in my last moments by persons who have never hitherto shown me any esteem or affection, well aware of their sordid views, I only dare confide my last will and testament to this my long-cherished piano.

"I hereby give and bequeath to Henri Aubriot, professor of music, in return for the sincere love he has ever evinced for me, every thing which I now, or which I may ever have been entitled to possess.

"I pardon my guardian for having attempted to force me into a marriage repugnant with my feelings, because I believe he sincerely thought it would be for my advantage.

"Lastly, I beseech the person into whose hands this document may fall, to publish and make this my last will.

"Made and dated two days after becoming 21 years of age AGATHA D'OLBREUSE.

"12th Dec., 1840."

The artist whose story I have here narrated, and whose history I have given under the name of *Aubriot*, is now the celebrated —

But no, it is not fair to give his *real* appellation.

LIVES OF THE EARLY PAINTERS.

BY MRS. JAMESON.

THE VENETIAN PAINTERS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

TINTORETTO—PAUL VERONESE—JACOPO BASSANO.

Titian was the last great name of the earlier schools of Italy—the last really *great* painter which she produced. After him came many who were good artists, excellent artificers; but, compared with the heaven-endowed creators in art, the poet-painters who had gone before them, they

were mere mechanics, the best of them. No more Raphaels, no more Titians, no more Michael Angelos, before whom princes stood uncovered! but very good painters, bearing the same relation to their wondrous predecessors that the poets, wits, and playwrights, of Queen Anne's time, bore to Shakespeare. There was, however, an intervening period between the death of Titian and the foundation of the Caracci school, a sort of interregnum, during which the art of painting sank to the lowest depths of labored inanity and inflated mannerism. In the middle of the sixteenth century Italy swarmed with painters. These go under the general name of the *mannerists*, because they all imitated the *manner* of some one of the great masters who had gone before them. There were imitators of Michael Angelo, of Raphael, of Correggio:—Vasari and Bronzino, at Florence; the two brothers Taddeo and Federigo Zuccaro, and the Cavalier d'Arpino, at Rome; Federigo Barocci, of Urbino; Luca Cambiasi, of Genoa; and hundreds of others, who covered with frescoes the walls of villas, palaces, churches, and produced some fine and valuable pictures, and many pleasing and graceful ones, and many more that were mere vapid or exaggerated repetitions of worn-out subjects. And patrons were not wanting, nor industry, nor science; nothing but original and elevated feeling—"the inspiration and the poet's dream."

But in the Venetian school still survived this inspiration, this vital and creative power, when it seemed extinct everywhere besides. From 1540 to 1590 the Venetians were the only *painters* worthy the name in Italy. This arose from the elementary principle early infused into the Venetian artists—the principle of looking to Nature, and imitating her, instead of imitating others and one another. Thus, as every man who looks to Nature, looks at her through his own eyes, a certain degree of individuality was retained even in the decline of the art. There were some who tried to look at Nature in the same point of view as Titian, and these are generally included under the general denomination of the School of Titian, though, in fact, he had no *school*, properly so called.

Morone was a portrait painter who, in some of his heads, equalled Titian. We have in England only one known picture by him, but it is a masterpiece—the portrait of a Jesuit, in the gallery of the Duke of Sutherland, which for a long time went by the name of Titian's Schoolmaster. It represents a grave, acute-looking man, holding a book in his hand, which he has just closed; his finger is between the leaves, and leaning from his chair, he seems about to address you.

"The very life is warm upon that lip,
The fixture of the eye has motion in't,
And we are mocked by art!"

Bonifazio, who had studied under Palma and Titian, painted many pictures which are frequently attributed to both these masters. Superior to Bonifazio was Alessandro Bonvicino, by whom there are several exquisite pictures in the Milan Gallery.

Andrea Schiavone, whose elegant pictures are often met with in collections, was a poor boy, who began the world as an assistant mason and house-painter, and who became an artist from the love of art; but by some fatality, or some quality of mind which we are wont to call a *fatality*, he remained always poor. He painted numerous pic-

tures, which others obtained, and sold again for high prices, enriching themselves at the expense of his toil of hand and head. At length he died, and in such wretched circumstances that he was buried by the charity of a few friends. In general the Venetian painters were joyous beings; Schiavone was a rare and melancholy exception. Very different was the temper and the fate of Paris Bordone, of Treviso, a man without much genius, weak in drawing, capricious or commonplace in invention, without fire or expression, but a divine colorist, and stamping on his pictures his own buoyant, life-enjoying nature; in this he was like Titian, but utterly inferior in all other respects. Some of his portraits are very beautiful, particularly those of his women, which have been often mistaken for Titian's.

The elder Palma is also considered as a scholar of Titian, though deriving as little from his personal instruction as did Tintoretto, Bordone, and others of the school. The date of his birth has been rendered uncertain by the mistakes of various authors, who confounded the elder and the younger Palma; but it appears that he was born between 1500 and 1515. He resembled in his manner both Titian and Giorgione. In some pictures he has shown the dignity of Titian, in others a touch of the melancholy sentiment of Giorgione. But not half the pictures attributed to Palma Vecchio are by him. We have not one in our National Gallery; and those at Hampton Court which are attributed to him are not genuine—mere third-rate pictures of the Venetian school. This painter had three daughters of remarkable beauty. Violante, the eldest and most beautiful, is said to have been loved by Titian, and to be the original of some of his most exquisite female portraits. One called Flora, because she has flowers in her hand; and another in the Pitti Palace, in a rich dress. We have the three daughters of Palma, painted by himself, in the Vienna Gallery; one, a most lovely creature, with long light brown hair, and a violet in her bosom, is without doubt Titian's Violante. In the Dresden Gallery are the same three beautiful girls in one picture, the head in the centre being the Violante.

It remains to give some account of two really great men, who were contemporaries of Titian, but could hardly be called his rivals, his equals, or his imitators. They were both inferior to him, but original men in their different styles.

The first was Tintoretto, born in 1512; his real name was Jacopo Robusto. His father was a dyer (in Italian, *Tintore*); hence he received in childhood the diminutive nickname *Il Tintoretto*, by which he is best known to us. He began, like many other painters whose genius we have recorded, by drawing all kinds of objects and figures on the walls of his father's house. The dyer, being a man of sense, did not attempt to oppose his son's predilection for art, but procured for him the best instruction his means would allow, and even sent him to study under Titian. This did not avail him much, for that most excellent painter was by no means a good instructor, and it is said that he became jealous of the progress of Tintoretto, or perhaps required more docility. Whatever might be the cause, he expelled him from his academy, saying, somewhat rashly, that "he would never be anything but a dauber." Tintoretto did not lose courage; he pursued his studies, and after a few years set up an academy of his own, and on the wall of his painting-room